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## 1. Introduction: Introducing Conservatism

Edmund Burke wrote his classic, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in response to a speech by Welsh philosopher, Richard Price. Price had embraced the revolutionary changes that were taking place in mainland Europe, welcoming the attack on the King's authority in France as an expression of long-term processes - processes that enfranchised humanity and moved it towards a happier, more moral and virtuous society. However, the arguments of Price were abhorrent to Burke, particularly his emphasis on fundamental principles and universal values. To Burke, such ideas were fiction - for him, the only values and morals of true substance were those established and nurtured by organic communities, across the ages. And this lifts the edge of the curtain on a key Conservative theme - the tendency to resist abstract principles, and to emphasize, rather, the concrete, the traditional and what has become apparent to people through their day-to-day experiences.

Burke, of course, is not the only important figure of the Conservative tradition, and the values behind his **Traditional Conservatism** do not represent the breadth of the ideas. For example, the Frenchman Joseph de Maistre is associated with **Authoritarian Conservatism**, while the **New Right** tradition is a mix of different ideas, encompassing **neo-conservative** social principles and **neo-liberal** economic principles. What tends to link these different streams of conservatism is an emphasis on some key elements, each of which emphasises values such as **tradition, authority and hierarchy**, or place a value on concepts such as **pragmatism, human imperfection, an organic society** and **property**.

Adopting conservative perspectives usually leads to professing strong views on the topics of the day. For example, the influence of Conservative ideas is seen when considering discussions on a range of contemporary issues, such as changes to the structure of the traditional family, the role of the church within society, or the significance of immigration and the development of a multicultural society. In addition, we come across strong Conservative perspectives when considering discussions about the economy, with the role of the free market being a frequently emphasized element - yet with some recognizing that the state can also take on important economic responsibilities.

In the context of **Welsh politics**, there is sometimes a tendency to assume that Conservatism has been a very marginal tradition. However, Conservatism should not be disregarded when discussing the history of modern Wales. Finally, while Conservatism itself is not recognized as a key ideology in the context of discussions about international politics, the influence of aspects of the Conservative world view can be seen when considering the ideas and arguments of Realists and neo-liberals.

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## 2. The Roots of Conservatism

The consensus among the majority of scholars is that Conservatism is a political ideology that developed in the early years of the nineteenth century. It is claimed that this happened as a response to the wide-ranging political, social and economic changes that swept across western Europe at the time. One major event that historians tend to refer to as an obvious symbol of this change - the move to what is described as the modern era - is the French Revolution of 1789. This was a particularly significant political event. During the Revolution the old absolute royal regime was demolished, and a new republic established on the basis of progressive principles, such as freedom, equality and fraternity (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*). And the assumption is that the political and social changes arising from this revolution were the main catalyst for the development of Conservative ideas. In other words, Conservatism is effectively an ideology that originally developed as a response to the French Revolution of 1789.

Some scholars have argued that the above story over-simplifies things a little and that Conservative trends are to be seen when considering political ideas from earlier periods. For example, some have argued for looking back as far as the early Greek period claiming that there are clear Conservative themes in the work of leading thinkers such as Plato (427-347 BC). Others refer to the work of different Medieval thinkers and argue that the ideas of more recent Conservatives of the nineteenth century echo themes that originally developed during this period. Another period referred to is the last decades of the seventeenth century, and in particular, the events in England which led to the 'Restoration' of the 1660s and the formalization of the regime of an exclusive monarchy which has, in effect, continued to this day. This is the period when the term 'Tory' was first used as a label to denote a particular political perspective. It was used to sum up the view of the group who were in favour of supporting the power of the monarchy, in contrast to the Whigs, who wished to reform it.

Each of the above interpretations no doubt has its merits. However, despite the existence of a number of Conservative themes before 1789, it was only following the great revolution in France that Conservatism developed to become a body of coherent and self-aware political ideas. A key figure in this process was the philosopher and politician Edmund Burke (1729-97). In 1790 Burke published his famous book, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* - a piece of work which is now considered to be one of the earliest statements of Conservative principles.

As the title suggests, Burke published his volume in response to the events in France a year earlier and in it Burke outlined why he was not supportive of the changes that arose from the Revolution. The sudden fall of the monarchy and the attempt to establish a new republic based on a belief in the freedom and equality of each individual was a matter of concern to him. Burke's fear was that there would be a sudden social change similar to that seen in France, but which would lead to an anarchic, chaotic condition and his intention in publishing *Reflections* was to warn the Westminster government in London against allowing such a situation to develop in Britain. Nowadays, some of Burke's ideas would probably seem totally unfounded. However, it is important to remember that the French Revolution was not an organized and peaceful event. There was bloody conflict and the collapse of the monarchy led to further conflict between different groups. Consequently, one can understand how some would have

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assumed at the time that the changes had led to a state of social anarchy. In any event, as noted, the publication of *Reflections* was a key event in the development of Conservatism and on account of the ideas outlined in the book, Burke came to be considered the father of the ideas expressed in it.

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## 3. Conservative Streams

Although several had suggested that Edmund Burke should be regarded as the father of Conservatism, it would be wrong to claim that the ideas had developed along one particular route, adhering strictly to the original arguments outlined by him in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Instead, since Burke's initial contribution Conservatism has developed in various ways and today a range of different Conservative streams can be identified. Here are three of the most significant.

### 3.1 Authoritative Conservatism

Emphasis on authority tends to be a prominent feature in Conservative work. Despite this, today Conservatives have generally come to terms with democracy and accept that legitimate political authority should derive from 'the consent of the people'. However, some Conservatives have taken a different position by arguing that the traditional emphasis on authority should be extended to include a belief in authoritarian governing arrangements. Authoritarianism can be defined as a belief in the importance of 'government from above'; that is, governance arrangements that are not dependent on consent and which, rather, place an emphasis on the wisdom, ability and integrity of whoever is leading. Faith in the authenticity of this method of governance stems from a belief in the importance of order and the assumption that order can only be maintained if people obey the government in an unquestionable manner.

A stream of Conservatism developed which emphasized similar themes in the early years of the nineteenth century and was particularly influential across parts of the 'continent' of Europe. One political thinker associated with this stream of Conservatism was the Frenchman Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). Like Edmund Burke, de Maistre was a harsh critic of the events of the French Revolution. However, unlike Burke, de Maistre wanted to restore the all-powerful royal regime that existed before the Revolution, without any reforms in order to make that regime more acceptable to the mass of the population. De Maistre was completely unwilling to accept any change to the *ancien régime* which was demolished in 1789. These arguments reflect the emphasis of the Authoritarian Conservatives on the need to maintain order above all else. It was only by ensuring a well-organized and stable society that people could feel safe and achieving this, in the opinion of thinkers such as de Maistre, called for full obedience to the 'master'. A warning was given that revolutionary, or even, gradual and organic social reforms, similar to those favoured by Burke, would weaken the ties that held organized society together and open the door to anarchy. Indeed, according to de Maistre, even cruel leaders should be obeyed, as questioning the authority of these people would only lead to greater uncertainty and suffering.

Many European Conservatives remained true to similar arguments for much of the nineteenth century, for example in Russia under the Tsar Nicholas 1st and also in Catholic countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy. This happened despite the wave of Liberal, Socialist and Nationalist ideas seen gaining ground during this period; ideas that recommended a range of far-reaching social changes. At the same time, in other cases Authoritarian Conservatives were seen to be successful in harnessing support among the new electorate. For example, in France between 1804 and 1815, Napoleon gained support by linking authoritarianism with the promise

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of growth and economic prosperity. Something similar was done in Argentina during the 1940s and 1950s when Juan Perón succeeded in taking power on a populist agenda. It must also be remembered that many of the early Nazi ideas reinforce the emphasis on authority, obedience and the promise of economic prosperity. Many of these ideas were highlighted in writings by the German philosopher Carl Schmitt. This highlights the fact that Authoritarian Conservatism has often overlapped with Fascist ideas.

## 3.2 Traditional Conservatism

While a number of nineteenth-century continental Conservatives adopted attitudes characterized by uncompromising opposition to political or social change of any kind, a more moderate Conservative tradition, and ultimately more successful electorally, has developed within Anglo-American circles. To a large extent, this tradition was more in keeping with the original ideas outlined by Edmund Burke.

What had caused particular concern to Burke in following the developments of the Revolution in France was the speed with which the royal regime which had been in operation for centuries was overthrown and the way that attempts had been made to put a completely new regime in its place. This was a very dangerous step in his opinion, as he stated in the following famous quotation:

'It is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purpose of society' (Burke, *Reflections*, 1790: 152.

Burke believed that traditional organizations or practices that have survived over a long period of time - for example, in the case of France, the monarchy - should be respected and that people should strive to maintain them. He insisted that, through survival, such traditions had proved to have intrinsic value and that they had come to embody important historical knowledge and wisdom that should not be depreciated.

However, while Burke strongly felt that traditional institutions or practices needed to be respected, he did not believe that political and social change should be resisted on every occasion. Instead, careful and orderly change - a change described by him as organic in nature - was acceptable. Indeed, he argued that a gradual change of this kind was necessary for the survival of society and its traditional practices and institutions:

'A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation' (Burke, *Reflections*, 1790: 285.

Therefore, Burke's preference was for a gradual change to maintain the traditional, and these are the kind of assumptions that emerge in the ideas of the Conservative group that followed him during the second half of the nineteenth century and then the first half of the twentieth century. This is a numerous group of people that are often described as the Traditional Conservatives. Another label used from time to time to describe this group is the Paternal Conservatives.

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In the case of the United Kingdom, an important figure which contributed to the further evolution of this Conservative tradition was Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881). Disraeli is known mainly as a politician - he was Prime Minister in 1868 and again between 1874 and 1880 - but he was also a notable novelist and many of his political ideas were originally expressed in novels such as *Sybil* (1845) and *Coningsby* (1844). These works were published at a time of considerable social and political tension. To begin with, the damaging social effects of industrialization, such as difficult working conditions, polarization of wealth and health problems, had become increasingly apparent in Britain and also on the continent. In addition, in parts of Europe such problems were used by political parties as a basis for pushing for radical social changes. 1830 and 1848 in particular are remembered as years of revolutions and political tension across the continent. Disraeli was concerned about such developments and his great political message was that Britain was in danger of becoming 'two nations': the rich and the poor. This would then result in severe instability. To avoid this, he argued that Britain needed to undertake a process of careful political and social reform.

Of course, similar arguments were put forward by Liberals and Socialists during the same period. However, there was a clear Conservative tone to the way in which Disraeli framed his arguments. To begin with, he emphasized that it was careful and gradual reform that should be undertaken. But in addition, reflecting his Conservative world view, his arguments combined pragmatic and principled elements. On the one hand, Disraeli insisted that allowing the economic inequality of the period to intensify would ultimately lead to a British revolution, similar to that seen in parts of Europe. This would jeopardize the status of society's privileged members, and consequently he insisted that it would be sensible for these people to support gradual reform, before things went too far. Such reform could protect the interests of these people in the long term. That therefore is the pragmatic side of his argument. But on the other hand, his argument had a moral and principled aspect. He suggested that wealth and privilege lead to social responsibility, especially responsibility to assist those who are poor and less fortunate. In professing such arguments, Disraeli was not drawing near to socialists or social liberals. Unlike these people he did not place great emphasis on equality. Rather, he believed in the Conservative idea of natural inequality or hierarchy. However, he believed that this hierarchy gave rise to specific duties, namely that the privileged were expected to reach out to help the less fortunate.

During his political career Disraeli succeeded in turning these arguments into practical action. He was responsible for the introduction of the 'Second Reform Act' in 1867, the bill which led to the extension of the right to vote to members of the working class for the first time. He was also responsible for a range of social reforms which contributed to improving housing and health conditions for the working class. In addition, the ideas and actions of Disraeli had a great influence on the world view of many later Conservatives. In Britain, this group is known as the 'One Nation Conservatives', a Conservative stream that has continued to hold Disraeli's belief in the need to balance a belief in order and tradition with a willingness to behave in a pragmatic manner and to introduce social reform in a gradual and careful way. Indeed, this is a Conservative stream that proved to be very influential in Britain during much of the twentieth century. It is thought to have been central to the programmes of the Conservative governments

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of Harold MacMillan (1957-1963) and, to a lesser extent, Edward Heath (1970-1974). For example, its influence is seen in the pragmatic way in which these governments have sought to guide the economy, combining a desire to promote private enterprise among individuals with a willingness to recognize that it is appropriate for the state to manage and regulate certain significant economic sectors, such as the steel and coal industries. More recently, it was suggested that John Major and David Cameron were also politicians who, in some ways, leaned towards this particular stream of pragmatic and gradual Conservatism.

Traditional Conservatism was also seen gaining ground in parts of Europe during the years following the Second World War. For example, these were the ideas that underpinned the politics of the Christian Democratic parties formed in countries such as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland during this period and which experienced significant electoral success, particularly in Germany. As with the United Kingdom's 'One Nation' Conservatives, the leaders of these parties, for example Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany between 1983 and 1998, believed that the state should be allowed to intervene in social and economic areas as long as there was a pragmatic case for that and that it was possible for any amendments to be introduced in a gradual manner.

### 3.3 The New Right

In the years following the end of the Second World War in 1945, it was the gradual, pragmatic and paternal world view associated with the Traditional group that held the upper hand within Conservative circles. The popularity of this particular stream of Conservatism was, to a large extent, the result of a constant willingness to compromise: initially with the wave of democratic ideas that consistently gained ground throughout the nineteenth century; and then later with the increasing emphasis given during the twentieth century on the need for the state to intervene in social and economic policy areas. Indeed, by the 1950s several political commentators argued that there was some kind of consensus emerging regarding the political middle ground - a consensus encompassing a range of Traditional Conservatives as well as a range of Social Liberals and also Democratic Socialists. This is often referred to as 'the Keynesian consensus', because those who belonged to it tended to accept some of the basic beliefs of the economist John Maynard Keynes, about the need for social and economic arrangements that recognized the key role of the state.

However, during the 1970s this consensus was destroyed by a new political movement which is now known as the 'New Right'. As this is a movement seen developing on the right side of the political spectrum, the New Right tends to be treated as a stream of ideas belonging to Conservatism. On the whole, doing so is appropriate. Yet, it needs to be recognized that this is not a well-organized body of coherent ideas brought together under the New Right label. Rather it can be interpreted as a tradition that encompasses two branches that draw on ideas derived from two different sources:

- The **neo-liberal** branch is based on Classical Liberal ideas about the economy, and in particular the ideas of thinkers such as Adam Smith about the need to promote fully free markets by restricting state control on economic issues. Ideas such as this were given

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renewed attention during the second half of the twentieth century as the economic and social interference of the state became increasingly far-reaching. Indeed, by the 1970s it was assumed that this state intervention was largely responsible for the huge economic slowdown experienced across western countries and the considerable inflation that came in its wake. The answer, in the opinion of thinkers such as the economists Friedrich von Hayek (1899-1992) and Milton Friedman (1912-2006), was to adopt a radical political programme that would lead to 'pushing back the state', leaving more space for private enterprise. In terms of practical action, this led to an emphasis on the privatisation of services and industries that were previously part of the public sector and thus under state control.

- The **neo-conservative** branch builds on Conservative ideas about the importance of order, authority and discipline - ideas that can be traced back to the Authoritarian Conservatives of the nineteenth century. These kinds of ideas were given renewed attention as a result of the assumption that some of the social reforms introduced across western countries during the 1960s, for example the legalisation of divorce and abortion, the abolition of the death penalty, the relaxation of censorship rules and also recognizing diversity through policies on multiculturalism, have undermined a sense of stability and social duty. Consequently, it was claimed that there has been a serious deterioration in law and order and also in public morality. As a result, the New Right is linked to arguments which emphasize the qualities of the traditional family and question the tendency to embrace new ways of organizing domestic life; arguments which question the willingness to adopt more tolerant and liberal social attitudes on issues such as sex and sexuality; arguments in favour of reintroducing stricter criminal penalties, including in relation to minor offences; and arguments against immigration and the development of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies in the belief that this is likely to lead to conflict and instability. Such arguments were often expressed with reference to a more orderly past where people lived more disciplined and virtuous lives. For example, in Britain the advocates of such arguments often mentioned the need to reinstate 'Victorian' values.

As a result, the New Right is quite a diverse body of political ideas that seeks to combine a particular form of economic liberalism with a conservative and authoritarian approach to social issues. As such, it is a body of ideas that combine radical, reactionary and traditional elements together. These ideas have undoubtedly been particularly influential in the last decades of the twentieth century. They were expressed most clearly during the 1980s in the form of Thatcherism in the United Kingdom and Reaganism in the United States. However, the New Right was not just a phenomenon that has been influential in these countries alone. It also left his mark on politics in other parts of Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Indeed, in the case of those ideas associated with the neo-liberal wing, their influence had spread across the world by the beginning of the twenty-first century as a result of the process of economic globalization.

Despite this influence, it should be noted that the New Right is a tradition that, ultimately, is based on an important contrast between its neo-liberal and neo-conservative branches. While one emphasizes the need for the state to step back and allow individuals to manage their own

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(economic) affairs, the other calls on the state to do more to oversee and regulate our social behaviour, offering clear (moral) guidance. Some have argued that this is a fundamental tension that undermines the extent to which the New Right can be interpreted as one body of ideas. However, if the New Right has to be thought of as a single Conservative stream, then the best way to do this possibly is to think of those who hold these ideas as believers in a restricted state but a strong one, or as Andrew Gamble (1981) notes, people who believe '*in the free economy and the strong state*'.

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## 4. Key elements of Conservatism

Despite the important differences between different streams, some elements can be identified that tend to be associated with the Conservative world view; elements that allow us to differentiate somewhat between Conservatism and other political ideologies, particularly Liberalism or Socialism.

### 4.1 Tradition

The need to keep and maintain and avoid sudden political and social change is a very important theme for Conservatives, particularly for those who belong to the Traditional stream. This means that many Conservatives have tended to place an emphasis on the notion of tradition; that is, there is a need to respect and honour different institutions or different practices that have a long history.

First of all, as Edmund Burke argued, by surviving over decades, or even centuries, some of our social institutions and practices have proved to have merit. The simple fact that they have been able to survive so long is proof that they can work well, and that people value them.

Furthermore, due to their longevity, they have come to incorporate important historical wisdom and experience. Consequently, it is argued that different social institutions and practices should be maintained and developed, not only for the benefit of today's generation, but also for the benefit of future generations. Some of these ideas can be seen at work when considering how some Conservatives in the UK have argued for the continuation of the monarchy. As part of these debates there are frequent references to the fact that the monarchy is an institution that has a long history and that, as a result, it is an institution with a wealth of political and constitutional experience and wisdom.

In addition, the Conservative emphasis on tradition derives from the belief that it can contribute to maintaining a sense of belonging and stability among members of society. The existence of a range of social and cultural practices that are familiar to people and have a long historical background is thought to reinforce the idea that individuals are rooted in society and have a strong connection with the generations that preceded them. Furthermore, it is argued that the fact that some of these customs are things that can be supported by all members of society can promote a sense of unity or social cohesion.

In general, the emphasis on tradition highlights an important difference between Conservatives and Liberals. Liberals tend to measure the value of institutions or social practices on the basis of their ability to serve the needs of individuals, rather than on the basis of their age and history - if institutions do not serve these needs, then they should be amended or revoked. Conservatives, however, disagree and argue that the survival of a particular institution or practice over time is itself sufficient reason to honour and respect them.

### 4.2 Pragmatism

There has been a tendency among Conservatives to question whether human beings can use their reasoning to gain a full understanding of the world with all its complications. As a result,

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great doubts were expressed about the value of promoting a body of abstract principles, such as freedom, equality or tolerance, as guidelines to guide us in politics and in deciding how society should be organized. Rather than emphasizing abstract principles, many Conservatives have stressed the need to put faith in our practical experience, and to act in a pragmatic manner. This means that our political decisions and actions should be informed by consideration of what appears to be practical and appropriate at the time, rather than by a body of general assumptions. In other words, the choice should be whatever is likely to 'work', whatever that may be. One well-known Conservative associated with this viewpoint is the Englishman, Michael Oakshott (1901-1990). In his view the world is far too complex to be organized on the basis of a body of abstract principles. Indeed, the emphasis on pragmatism has encouraged a number of Conservatives to claim that they do not really profess a political ideology. Instead, thinkers such as Oakshott prefer to describe Conservatism as a 'way of thinking' or a 'lifestyle', where knowledge is something 'practical' that will be developed through life experience, rather than something 'technical'. accumulated through the study of textbooks and written sources.

While pragmatism is a feature that has traditionally claimed a central place in the Conservative world view, it is important to note that it does not claim such a prominent place in more recent Conservative debates. Indeed, the emphasis placed on fundamental principles is one of the distinguishing features of the New Right, which emerged during the second half of the Twentieth Century from a number of earlier Conservative streams, such as the Traditional stream. For example, in the case of neo-Conservatives and non-Liberals such as von Hayek, Freedman and Nozick, the need to significantly restrict the active role of the state, particularly within the economy, is treated as a fundamental principle that should be strictly adhered to. However, in the opinion of Paternal Conservatives, such as the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Harold Macmillan, care should be taken not to allow the influence of the state to extend too widely, but at the same time consideration should be given to allowing the state to intervene in social or economic areas if there is a pragmatic case for doing so.

## **4.3 Human imperfection**

Liberalism and Socialism are political ideologies which tend to interpret human beings as 'good' in nature or that at least have the potential to be 'good', as long as their social circumstances permit that. Conservatives, however, tend to reject such assumptions and think of us as imperfect, impaired beings. This emphasis on the imperfect nature of humans manifests itself in a range of different ways.

To begin with, it is argued that our understanding of the world and its complexities is limited. This links back to the earlier emphasis on pragmatism. Because we do not have the ability to fully understand the world, it is futile to try to organize society based on a series of abstract principles. It is better to operate in a pragmatic manner based on the circumstances we face at the time.

Secondly, it is argued that human beings have important psychological weaknesses. It is claimed that, on the whole, we are creatures that shy away from loneliness and a lack of

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stability and that, as a result, we crave safety and security. It is interesting to contrast this uncertain picture of individuals with the liberal picture of confident individuals who have the ability to set a course for their own lives. It is this belief that individuals seek reassurance and a sense of belonging that has led Conservatives to place great emphasis on order, sometimes setting this as of more importance than freedom.

Thirdly, there is a tendency among Conservatives to claim that human beings have moral shortcomings. It is said that we are essentially selfish and greedy creatures who tend to desire power. Such a belief in the moral weakness of the individual has led a number of Conservatives to reject the belief that crime and social disorder are things arising from unfortunate social circumstances, such as poverty or inequality. Rather, it is claimed that they are the result of a fundamental moral weakness on the part of the individual. More often than not, it is possible to trace the basis of this interpretation back to ideas about original sin, and the Christian interpretation of human nature (associated with philosophers such as St Augustine) who consider that human beings are corrupt creatures who have inherited Adam and Eve's weakness and guilt. This is a further reason why conservatives tend to place emphasis on the need for order and for a government that administers a strict justice system in order to maintain that order.

## ***4.4 An organic society***

Conservatives have traditionally placed emphasis on the idea that every individual is rooted in society. It was maintained that it does not make sense to think of the individual as a creature that can exist apart from society. Instead, everyone is born to be members of larger social entities, for example the family, the community or the nation. Such links contribute to sustaining us, shaping our characters, and contributing to fostering a sense of belonging which Conservatives think is vital. Indeed, this interpretation of the significance of the connection between the individual and the wider society has caused many Conservatives to respond to the liberal emphasis on the freedom of the individual by arguing that there is also a need to remember the individual's duties or commitments towards society.

Therefore, the well-being of society as a universal entity has been an important consideration within the Conservative tradition, particularly among members of the Traditional stream. In noting this, it is also worth highlighting the particular interpretation of the nature of society that has been embraced. Traditionally, Conservatives have interpreted society as an organic entity: a living entity where different parts work together just like the heart, lungs, liver and brain do in the human body. In the case of the body, all of these organs need to work together in harmony or the whole body will fail. Many Conservatives think the same is true of society. Key elements such as the family, the local community, the church, together with a range of other traditional organizations, are thought to act as organs that support the life of the society and ensure that it runs smoothly from day to day. As a result, there has been a tendency among Conservatives to oppose developments that bring about a change in the nature or function of some of these organizations. For example, in the case of the family, concern was expressed about developments such as the changing patterns of parental work, the change in parenting practices, and most significantly, the change in our interpretation of what the family unit is and

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who can be parents. The Conservatives believe that such steps could jeopardize the fragile fabric that sustains society.

In recent decades the organic interpretation of society has claimed a slightly less prominent place in Conservative discussions. This is mainly due to the growth of the New Right and the way in which the neo-liberal branch of this stream has contradicted many more traditional Conservative assumptions about the nature of society. In the present context what is significant is that the neo-liberal New Right tendency to embrace the abstract individualism that was previously such a prominent feature of Classical Liberalism, has led to the creation of a world-view which, in effect, rejects the notion of society as a composite, cooperative entity. As Margaret Thatcher, one of the leading politicians of the New Right tradition, claimed there is no such thing as society, only a collection of individuals and their families.

## 4.5 Hierarchy

Traditionally, Conservatives have argued that hierarchy and inequality are inevitable features of any society. This means that they assume that ensuring meaningful social equality, for example in terms of status, wealth or power, is an impossible objective. In that respect, there is an element of overlap between Conservatism and Liberalism. However, while Liberals treat the existence of inequality as a compromise that must be accepted in order to allow for variations in tastes or abilities among different individuals, Conservatives tend to interpret it as something deeper which is key to the functioning of society - in effect, something that should be interpreted in *positive* terms.

The practice of treating social inequality as a natural and positive feature stems from the organic image that is part of the Conservative world view. As already explained, many Conservatives have chosen to interpret society as a living entity where different parts work together just like the different organs of the human body. In the case of the body, each of these organs performs a particular function, and Conservatives have argued that different groups or classes within society should be thought about in the same way. There is a clear echo of the ideas of the Greek philosopher Plato in this vision. Plato insisted that members of society naturally belong to one of three different groups: i) the King Philosophers who control on the basis of their wisdom; ii) the soldiers, who protect the city on the basis of their spirit; iii) and the traders, who create wealth and sustain the life of the city on the basis of their tendency to desire more.

Based on the belief that everyone within society has their natural place and function, conservatives have insisted that it must be accepted that some should lead while others follow; some should control while others work; or that some should go out to earn a wage while others stay at home to raise children. It was ideas such as these that were responsible for the fact that early Traditional Conservatives such as Edmund Burke argued in favour of the idea of a 'natural aristocracy', which is the assumption that the ability and wisdom to take on leadership roles within society is intrinsic and only belongs to some of the higher classes. Furthermore, the belief in a hierarchy or natural inequality has led to a typical Conservative approach to justifying policies aimed at supporting less fortunate members of society. Unlike Liberals or Socialists, this is not done on the basis of considerations relating to freedom or equality, but rather by

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emphasizing that it is the privilege and duty of the rich to support the poor. For example, this was a notable feature of Benjamin Disraeli's arguments, the nineteenth-century Conservative Prime Minister who introduced measures in areas such as housing and health to improve conditions for the working class.

## **4.6 Authority**

The above belief in a hierarchy and the inevitable nature of inequality is reinforced by the Conservative emphasis on authority. Conservatives tend to interpret authority as a natural thing that, just like society itself, already exists and is imposed upon us 'from above'. Consequently, unlike Liberals, Conservatives do not consider that professing valid authority is dependent on the explicit consent of the person who is to obey. It is said that this would be meaningless, as the role of the authority holder is to provide guidance, support and assistance to those who lack the ability, knowledge or experience to decide for themselves. As a result, parents in the home should have authority in relation to their children; at school the teacher should have authority in relation to pupils; in the workplace the manager should hold authority in relation to his employees; and in the case of a society government should have authority in relation to individual citizens.

The idea of authority that derives 'from above' is not seen by Conservatives as a bad thing. Rather, it is believed to contribute to the promotion of social stability, creating a sense amongst the population of what is expected of them. In addition, it is said that clear authority contributes to the promotion of discipline. For these reasons, Conservatives have tended to be a party which is suspicious of attempts to challenge political authority. Indeed, in the case of nineteenth century Authoritarian Conservatives, doing this would be totally unacceptable as they treat political authority whatever its form as an absolute.

## **4.7 Property**

Conservatives generally place great emphasis on the concept of property. They believe that our ability to own private property or assets has several virtues. Like many Liberals, Conservatives recognize the argument that ownership of property is an expression of merit; that is, the fact that a person succeeds in amassing a substantial stock of property or wealth derives from his willingness to strive through his life and to use his personal talents constructively. However, many Conservatives have argued that ownership of property also has wider social and psychological benefits.

Firstly, possessing property such as a house and a car, or having substantial savings in the bank gives people an element of certainty as they are resources that can be used to support us if we are faced with difficult circumstances (e.g. unemployment or long-term illness). Secondly, it is claimed that a society that allows ownership of private property is one that motivates its members to respect the law and behave in an orderly manner. It is assumed that those that own property themselves are likely to respect the property of their fellow citizens. They will appreciate the need to protect property by supporting crime prevention arrangements and maintaining order. Thirdly, at a deeper and more personal level, it is argued that possessing

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property is a means of allowing individuals to express their personality; that is, our property is almost an extension of ourselves and a means of conveying our character.

Yet, despite the emphasis on the social contribution of private property, traditionally Conservatives have not argued that the ownership of property by the individual should be recognized as an absolute right. Rather, it was insisted that the individual's right to manage his assets and wealth was a matter that should be balanced against that person's duties to society more generally. However, as the Right New ideas gained ground over the last few decades (and particularly as the neo-liberal arm of that movement gained increasing influence), an increasing number of contemporary conservatives were seen to be developing an increasingly uncompromising attitude towards the issue of private property.

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## 5. Conservatism and society

### 5.1 *The Family and the Church: Gay marriage*

An interesting example of the relationship between conservative politics, the family and the Church emerged in 2014, when homosexual marriage was legalized in the United Kingdom. The Conservative Government was responsible for the legislation, which allowed the same right to couples who were until then only eligible for a civil union. That legislation had come into force in 2004, under a Labour government, and so the Conservatives effectively extended that principle to marriage. It was not, therefore, a radical change. Yet it meant that from then on religious organizations had the opportunity to choose to offer the option of an official marriage of homosexual couples. The examples up until now are very few, however, with Quakers and Unitarians among the few groups to decide to do so. The Anglican Church has refused to change its practice, which reinforces the fact that it considers the question from a different viewpoint to the Conservative Party, its traditional supporters. The argument was not justified by the party leader, David Cameron, on the basis of the more left-wing concept of social equality, however. Instead, he appealed to conservative 'traditional' values by emphasizing the belief in the importance of marriage and family as institutions that are at the heart of society. This is an example of displaying conservatism pragmatism on occasion, and the willingness to see 'organic' change in society and tradition. It must be remembered, of course, that this is not how all aspects of conservatism consider the situation, with the more authoritarian tendency among the new neo-conservative Right members (especially in America) arguing that there is a need to guard against any change to traditional institutions or social structures, as this is likely to undermine authority and lead to a lack of order.

### 5.2 *Multiculturalism: diversity, integration, immigration*

Since the Second World War in particular, societies are characterized by significant changes in their populations as people migrate from one country to another. This process was often due to the needs of states such as the United Kingdom and Germany, as they struggled to recreate and re-establish themselves after the war, partly by attracting workers from other parts of the world. In the case of the United Kingdom, significant numbers arrived from the former Empire countries - people of different nations and religions. The response among British Conservatives has highlighted the differences and tensions between those who are more authoritarian and opposed to change, and those who are more tolerant and willing to embrace change within society. Tensions emerged in the 1960s as numbers began to worry about the knock-on effects of the change, and these reservations were expressed in Enoch Powell's famous speech, which quoted Virgil's line predicting the River Tiber 'foaming with blood'. Powell argued that society was changing to such an extent that people no longer knew it as their own society, and that conflict was the inevitable outcome of the process. He was excluded from the Conservative shadow Cabinet, but the themes in his speech would return.

By the end of the 20th century liberals in particular had developed the concept of multiculturalism as a means of justifying and arguing the case for ensuring rights for minority groups, demonstrating that supporting their values and lifestyle did not go against traditional

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western values. The views were accepted in part by moderate conservatives, but things changed following the World Trade Centre terrorist attacks, and the subsequent war on terror. The failure to integrate members of the Muslim community within the wider culture was blamed by many, and indeed these were the Prime Minister David Cameron's arguments in 2011, despite the fact that he was an individual with traditional, rather than authoritarian Conservative views. These aspects emerged during the pre-Brexit referendum debate in 2016, with immigration a major issue as those campaigning for leaving blamed the state's problems on immigrants. There have been divisions among Conservatives during these years, with many turning to UKIP, which expressed much more authoritarian, aggressive ideas that brought Enoch Powell to mind. The Conservative Party itself had also been split into two, and David Cameron now found it difficult to stop the flow of more extreme right-wing ideas. More often than not, romanticising about a 'lost' Britain, the regret at the loss of past institutions, and complaining about the growing undermining of traditional Britain were at the heart of the debate - demonstrating a powerful mix of romantic and authoritarian conservatism. The side effect of this change is not only the Brexit vote to leave, but also policy changes to create a 'hostile environment' for immigrants. As a result, a large number of the older generation - the 'Windrush generation' - who arrived from the Caribbean from the 1940s onwards, have been excluded from the country because of shortcomings in their paperwork.

### ***5.3 Wellbeing: redistribution and work***

One of the cornerstones of conservative thinking is the faith in the concept of individual responsibility. That is, the Conservative will generally believe that we as human beings control our actions and control our circumstances, without much influence from other directions. On the whole, the traditional Conservative will consider the hard work he does, the earnings he saves, and the respect he derives from his everyday actions to be a direct result of his efforts. This is at odds with socialism, which considers these results to reflect the good fortunes of the individual - the fact that he has, for example, a supportive family, sufficient resources, and inherited abilities. For this reason, the socialist does not consider that we have a simple right to keep all our earnings - to some extent they are the result of luck that is beyond our efforts and responsibility as an individual, and to some extent also prosperity of any form is not possible without reliance on wider society. On the other hand, the conservative will insist that he or she is deserving and that the possessions we have created or won through our own efforts should remain with us.

There are obvious implications in respect of ideas such as tax, education and work. For the Conservative, we should pay minimal tax because others have no right over our property nor the wealth we create through our labours. We should be free to place our children in private schools with incredible facilities, because where parents are willing to pay such money for education, and give their children maximum benefits, their wishes are more important than any consideration regarding ensuring equality within the community. Indeed, there are no problematic moral implications for the Conservative if this kind of practice and policy leads to a very unequal society over time, because a hierarchy for them is a characteristic part of human society. Social inequality is not the result of different opportunities, or better resources or material benefits, but proof that fundamental differences exist between people's abilities.

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## 6. Conservatism and the economy

Given the nature of the contemporary arguments heard by members of the Conservative Party, it could be assumed that Conservatism is an ideology that has always been true to the qualities of the free market and the belief that state intervention should be kept to a minimum in the operation of the economy. However, it should be emphasized that the practice for Conservatives to insist that such beliefs should be held as a matter of principle has been a relatively recent development. Indeed, it was only with the development of the New Right during the 1970s that substantial numbers of Conservatives came to voice the neo-liberal view that economic prosperity was reliant on 'pushing back the state' and ensuring as much space as possible for private enterprise by self-sufficient individuals.

Looking back at the traditional Conservatism that was widely supported by large numbers up to the 1970s, we see a very different view of how the state should engage with the economy. As already explained, one of the most obvious features of this particular strand of Conservatism was a belief in the need to engage with a range of political questions in a pragmatic manner: to be prepared to deliver social and economic reforms in a careful manner, in whatever way that seemed appropriate in the circumstances. With this in mind, Traditional Conservatives, such as the English philosopher Michael Oakeshott, and also English politicians such as Harold MacMillan and R.A. Buttler, were sceptical of the Social Democrats' arguments that insisted that it was only by supporting 'state control' that an economy could be achieved that would operate in a fair and effective manner. But at the same time, they expressed great doubts when some on the right-wing of the political spectrum began to argue that a stance should be adopted which rejected any state intervention in the economy as a matter of principle. As Oakeshott argued, the two perspectives in the end had the same ideological weakness: *'A plan to resist all planning may be better than its opposite, but it belongs to the same style of politics'* (1962: 212).

Consequently, while Traditional Conservatives had been wary of embracing the Social Democrats' faith in the state's ability to steer the economy, they did not consider either that such policies should be opposed in a completely dogmatic way. Instead, it was the view of this Conservative group that they should be prepared to support whichever economic programme that seemed to work at the time - to be pragmatic. In the United Kingdom, this is the reason why the Conservative Governments of the 1950s and 1960s did not seek to undo many of the far-reaching social and economic reforms introduced by the 1945-51 Labour Government - measures that included establishing the national health service, the introduction of a more comprehensive education system and the nationalization of important industrial sectors such as coal, steel, gas, electricity and the railways. In the following decades, these measures appeared to be bearing fruit and so the pragmatic Conservatives of the period were ready to accept and support them.

However, today the economic view among Conservatives has changed. Due to the major international economic difficulties of the 1970s, the type of debates expressed by the New Right about the need to limit the economic role of the state gained greater credibility. This led to important changes in the type of policy programmes offered by Conservative political parties, particularly here in the United Kingdom and also in the US Republican Party. These policy

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programmes aimed in principle to cut public expenditure levels and to reduce the 'size' of the state, for example by privatising a range of industries and services that were previously part of the public sector. This was in stark contrast to the more pragmatic and gradual approach of the Conservatives of previous decades and to a large extent this has been the trend in Conservative circles ever since.

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## 7. Conservatism in Welsh politics

A fundamental barrier will be faced when offering an analysis of the influence of Conservatism in Wales, because very few academic sources deal with the subject. The academic situation reflects a wider situation in this regard, namely the perception that Conservatism is an English, alien tradition. Writing about the Conservative party or Conservatism in general therefore is, at best, a minority action. However, there is a danger that this can lead to a perception which marginalises the Conservative tradition in a way that does not match its relative significance in Wales throughout the modern period.

### 7.1 *The historic Tories in Wales*

The term 'Tory' has its origins in the seventeenth century, and the turbulent period that began with the English civil war. The word comes from the Old Irish, and the term *tóraidhe* (a brigand or a thief) and it was originally used to describe the Irish who continued in their opposition to Oliver Cromwell's reign at the end of the Civil War. More recently, the term was used to describe the Members of Parliament who supported James the Second's right to succeed his brother, Charles the Second as king. James had turned to the Catholic Church at a time when Protestantism was rapidly gaining ground.

This direct link with Catholicism did not continue, but Toryism remained in other forms, and the tradition is now known as the forerunner of the modern Conservative and Unionist Party formed in 1834 under the leadership of Robert Peel. The cornerstones of the Tory tradition were strong support for the Monarchy, suspicion of radical social reform, and support for the Church of England. By the end of the eighteenth century these ideas had been coupled with the more liberal views of the Whigs, influenced by figures such as Edmund Burke, and Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger. This is the period in which modern Conservatism was formed in the United Kingdom.

The second half of the nineteenth century proved to be a challenging time for the Conservative Party as it wrestled with the consequences of the UK democratisation process. The franchise was gradually expanded through a series of important reform laws in 1832, 1867 and 1884 and this had a major impact on the support for the party and its status, particularly in Wales. Since the introduction of the Acts of Union in the nineteenth century, Conservative landowners had dominated the politics of the country, holding the majority of parliamentary seats. However, this changed from the 1860s onwards as more and more ordinary men gained the right to vote and extended their support to the Liberal Party. An event often cited as a symbol of this great change was the victory of the Liberal, Henry Richard, in Merthyr Tydfil in the 1868 election. Indeed, by 1906 there were no Conservative MPs left in Wales.

### 7.2 *The Conservatives in Wales 1885-1997*

The Conservatives did not disappear from Welsh politics during the twentieth century. However, the party did not come close to regaining its status from the pre-democratic period. Indeed, at the end of the century in 1997 there was another election where the party did not win a single electoral seat. Given this background - alongside the fact that the Conservative Party has

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consistently secured a vote in Wales that was some 10% lower than in England - you can understand how the perception developed that Conservatism has not been a relevant tradition in the discussion of Welsh politics.

Indeed, some structural factors may have contributed to limiting the appeal of Conservatism to electors in Wales. For example, as individualism and property tend to be values that have greater significance for middle- and upper-class voters, it may not have been surprising that a country with higher percentages of the population belonging to the working class vote mainly for left-wing parties. Another factor that has been highlighted in trying to explain the relative failure of the Conservatives is the fact that some of the old features that go back to the Tory period - such as Anglicanism, love of the monarchy and wealth - have contributed to maintaining the perception that the Conservative party was essentially an English party.

However, despite these factors, care should be taken not to conclude that Conservatism has been irrelevant in Welsh politics. During the second half of the twentieth century, the party secured a foothold in a number of constituencies beyond the industrial areas. Indeed, in 1983 the party secured 14 of the 38 parliamentary seats in Wales. Most of these seats were in rural and relatively anglicised areas such as Pembrokeshire, the Vale of Glamorgan, the north coast and those areas bordering England - the areas described by political scientist Denis Balsom as 'British Wales'.

Yet, Welsh Conservatism in the twentieth century should not be interpreted as only an English and British force. Significantly, Conservative politicians contributed to many of the policy developments seen in relation to the Welsh language from the 1970s onwards. For example, the Secretary of State, Nicholas Edwards was key to the discussions that ultimately led to the establishment of S4C in 1980. More importantly, Sir Wyn Roberts, a former Member of Parliament for the Conwy constituency and a deputy-minister in the Welsh Office, was absolutely crucial to developments such as the 1988 Education Act (which led to the establishment of Welsh as an essential subject in the curriculum and to the establishment of the practice that pupils in Wales study a different education curriculum to England), the establishment of the Welsh Language Board, and also the 1993 Welsh Language Act which contributed to ensuring more prominent public status for the Welsh language.

### ***7.3 Conservatism in the era of devolution***

Although the Conservatives campaigned against the establishment of the National Assembly devolution offered the party the opportunity to re-establish a presence in Welsh politics following its great losses during the 1997 Westminster election. The party's level of the vote and the number of seats in the Assembly increased in all elections between 1999 and 2011. Indeed by 2011 it succeeded in ousting Plaid Cymru as the main opposition party in Cardiff Bay.

During this period there was a deliberate attempt to try to adopt a more positive attitude towards devolution and also to try to give the party's image a more Welsh flavour. Nick Bourne, leader of the Conservative group in the Assembly between 1999 and 2011, was key to this move. Another important figure in the context of the development of Conservatism in Wales during the post-devolution period is Assembly Member David Melding. In a series of striking essays,

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Melding has argued for further devolution for Wales and also the need for fundamental constitutional reform across the UK including the adoption of full federal arrangements. Indeed, Melding's arguments reflect elements of Traditional Conservatism figures such as Burke and Oakeshott, in particular the assumption that major political and social changes should not be resisted, but rather embraced in a pragmatic way in order to lay stronger foundations for the future. The presence of individuals such as Bourne and Melding in the ranks of the Conservative party in Wales was all important during the post-2007 Assembly election period. At that time the possibility of establishing a 'Rainbow coalition' between the Conservatives, Plaid Cymru and the Liberals was raised to oust the Labour government that had been in power since the beginning of devolution in the late 1990s. This is another example of the pragmatic approach that characterises the politics of many Welsh Conservatives.

Of course, the rainbow coalition was not established in the end. The reality was that there were deep doubts about the idea to be found among the ranks of the three different parties. In this respect, it is worth pausing for a second to consider the different attitudes to the scheme expressed by Plaid Cymru members. As a party that, since the early 1980s, has positioned itself firmly on the left of the political spectrum and which, on several occasions, has described itself as a party that professes a form of 'democratic socialism', it was no surprise that many of its members expressed considerable discontent about the idea of establishing a coalition which would involve working with Conservatives. At the same time, many other members were receptive to the idea. This highlights the fact that nationalist organizations can encompass individuals who have a range of different perspectives along the left-right spectrum.

Indeed, in the case of Wales, it is important to note that the National movement's ideas have included a notable Conservative tradition. A key figure in this context was Saunders Lewis - a poet, playwright and leader of Plaid Cymru during its early years. In his numerous writings Lewis regularly combines nationalist beliefs with a romantic form of Conservatism. This can be seen, for example, in his famous political essay, the *Principles of Nationalism*, where he argues that Welsh life and culture should be interpreted as part of an old European tradition and that efforts should be made to conserve this heritage through reversal of the great industrialization experienced by Wales during the nineteenth century. Similar romantic features also appear in some of the ideas of philosopher J.R. Jones, who published several influential articles on nationalism and the connection between language and identity during the 1960s. In these essays there is an echo of Jones' desire to return to a past life, one that was free from the influence of the shallow Anglo-American culture which, by the 1960s, was rapidly gaining a foothold across the most Welsh areas of Wales through the media and TV. It was the threat to the Welsh tradition and organic society that Jones was most concerned about.

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## 8. Conservatism and global politics

### 8.1 *Political Realism and its Origins*

There is no specific ideology or theory known as 'Conservatism' in the field of international relations, yet there are many thinkers and intellectual traditions in the field who hold ideas which are Conservative in nature. Indeed, Realism, the viewpoint that has dominated discussions on international politics for decades complements many Conservative ideas and values, for example pragmatism, belief in the imperfection of the human character and also an emphasis on order and authority.

Scholars studying international relations have traced the origins of the Realist tradition back over a number of years. Reference is often made to Thucydides, the historian and Athenian general from the 5th century BC, as the father of Realism. He was the author of the historical volume 'The History of the Peloponnesos' and one well-known chapter of that book - The Melian Dialogue - is recognized as a classic, which speaks volumes about the nature of international politics. In addition, St Augustine, the philosopher and theologian who reached the heights of the Christian Church during the 5th century, is regarded as an important influence - in particular his emphasis on the fallible and corrupt nature of the human character. Another important figure is the Italian, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), the author of the well-known volume, 'The Prince' - a kind of guide for political leaders who argued that they should be prepared to take whatever action was necessary to maintain their power and influence. Finally, reference is often made to the ideas of the Englishman, Thomas Hobbes, and in particular his picture of life in the 'natural state' - an imaginary social condition characterised by persistent conflict due to the absence of any political authority.

### 8.2 *20th Century Realism*

Although its roots extend far back into the past, it was in the twentieth century that Realism evolved into a cohesive body of ideas that offer an interpretation of the nature of international politics. During this period, a central question driving discussions among realist thinkers has been why have conflict, violence and warfare been such consistent features of involvement between states on the international stage. Indeed, from the Realist perspective, this question stands above all other considerations when discussing international politics.

Today, a distinction is drawn between two different Realist streams that developed during the twentieth century:

- **Classical Realism:** This is a view associated with the years following the Second World War and the work of thinkers such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morganthau. In the view of these thinkers, international political trends - and in particular the trend towards violence and conflict - could be interpreted as symptoms of the fallible nature of the human personality - our tendency towards selfish behaviour and our continued desire for power and status. As a result of these intrinsic trends, it has been assumed that the involvement of states with each other will always be driven by selfish considerations. This means that priority will always be given to seeking opportunities to gain advantage

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over others in order to promote the 'national interest' - with the need to gain advantage in terms of military power being more important than anything else.

- **Neo-realism:** This is a more recent Realist tradition mainly associated with the work of the American, Kenneth Waltz. Unlike the Classical Realists, Waltz considered that the anarchic nature of the international system, rather than the inherent weaknesses of human nature was the underlying factor in attempting to understand why conflict and violence were persistent themes in international politics. Thomas Hobbes' earlier ideas are echoed, with the international system of sovereign states being compared to the 'natural state' where individuals live without any higher authority to maintain order. According to Waltz, due to the fact that no sovereign body stands above the states of the world, it is inevitable that they will seek opportunities to ensure their safety by expanding their military capabilities and this in turn motivates competition and instability.

## 8.3 Neo-conservatism

In very broad terms, the realist view could be interpreted as one that was apt to explain the international system during the Cold War, and the struggle for supremacy between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. In this context a viewpoint focusing on concepts such as power, conflict and power balance was one that offered reasonable explanations. Of course, by the end of the 20th century the Soviet Union had disintegrated, and the United States of America stood alone as the only global super-power. In this context, another body of Conservative ideas came to gain influence, particularly during the presidency of the Republican, George W. Bush. The ideology of Republicans such as Bush was characterised by neo-conservative perspectives which emphasised order, authority and discipline alongside specific evangelical beliefs. These ideas were based on the work of philosophers such as Leo Strauss and Carl Schmitt.

Strauss was a German who moved to the United States like many others in the years before the Second World War and gained fame as a member of the 'Chicago School'. Strauss was a harsh critic of liberalism and its tendency, in his opinion, to emphasize fundamental, universal values. Central to his ideas on international politics was a belief in the need for an external enemy - one that has been identified as the 'other'. This 'other' is critical, Strauss believes, as it creates a focus that helps shape the identity of the nation-state by offering an external entity that embraces everything that is alien, different and dangerous. By identifying this other, it is possible to confirm and emphasize what is important and unique about the nation, thereby strengthening authority, discipline and order among the people.

Some of these ideas were incorporated into George W. Bush's foreign policy, particularly after the terrorist attack on *the World Trade Centre* on September 11, 2001. After this attack in the name of the Al-Qaeda group, the enemy was defined in the 'War on Terror' as being totally different and exceptional, and one which held values which were totally different to the values and ethics of the West, and the USA in particular. This provided an opportunity to emphasize the merits of 'American' values and to create domestic and foreign policies based on the goal of winning against the external terrorist enemy. These policies, together with the rhetoric used to

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justify them, led to the creation of conditions similar to those described by Carl Schmitt as the 'state of exception' - an exceptional political condition where it is acceptable for the state to set aside normal constitutional procedures and use force in whatever way was necessary to ensure safety. Under such exceptional conditions, it became possible to take steps such as the opening the controversial Guantanamo Bay camp which would have been considered totally unacceptable a few years previously.

## ***8.4 Neo-liberalism: globalization, development and the Washington Agreement***

The neo-liberal perspective is associated with the Conservative figures of the 1980s, particularly Ronald Reagan, President of the USA, and Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. They put into practice the ideas of thinkers such as von Hayek and Friedman, who essentially emphasized the importance and efficiency of the free market above all else. This belief is expressed through policies that reduced the influence of the state, with less support for some parts of the economy, and an attempt to 'privatise' a number of services previously provided by government. The rationale behind this view was that the competition that is central to the operation of capitalism would ensure better services at a cheaper cost.

On the international level, such neo-liberal attitudes became more prevalent and were expressed more passionately following the collapse of the Soviet Block and its Communist system after 1989. This led to the spread of neo-liberal ideas and policies across Eastern Europe. During the same period, countries across the Far East were seen moving in the same direction. The 1990s are generally seen as a period when the free capitalist market was spreading in a more comprehensive and far-reaching way than in any previous period - and where the world was 'contracting' as the logic of globalization induced states to relax their boundaries and to allow more international economic activity.

The 1990s were also a time when increasing attention was being given to the inequality and dire poverty seen across the world. Increasing emphasis was placed on the need to ensure that countries that were previously members of the large European Empires were 'gaining ground' and 'catching up' economically with the rest of the world. From the neo-liberal perspective embracing market capitalism was the only solution. If the developing states of the world - following the example of the Soviet bloc countries - embraced the free market and opened themselves to investment by foreign businesses, development and prosperity would follow. These ideas were crystallized by the phrase the 'Washington Agreement' - a belief in a series of policy practices agreed by that city's major international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and also the American government Treasury. These policy practices included an emphasis on the need to allow foreign businesses to establish themselves in the countries concerned, the need to allow direct foreign investment, and also the need to privatise services and limit state control of the economy.

By the beginning of the new millennium there was increasing recognition of the limitations of the Washington Agreement - in particular the obvious benefits to the stronger, more advanced economies, and the barriers faced by less developed countries. As a result, many, such as Joseph Stiglitz, emphasized the need to intervene and restructure the framework of the

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international economy in a more balanced way, while a consensus has also developed about the need to ensure more effective governance structures and practices within developed countries.